

## Aboriginal Remains In Pocahontas County

By Dr. N. R. Price

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As stated in my former letter I have been an investigator of aboriginal remains in Pocahontas County, West Virginia, and have made a collection of several thousand fine specimens of Indian stone relics. These investigations and collections have extended over a period of twenty-five years, during which time I have visited every part of the County where camping sites were reported to exist, and have visited nearly every earth work or mound.

My observations and the traditional history of early settlers of this region led me to believe that there were no permanent settlements in this part, that is to say that the region was visited by Indians only in their migratory fashion, or perhaps at certain seasons for the fine hunting and fishing that was had here, and which is still a favorite resort of hunters of the white race. The larger articles and cooking utensils that mark the more permanent camp sites in other localities, as in the region of the Chesapeake Bay,

the crooked fork of Elk River. The valley of Knapps Creek was followed to the junction with Douthards Creek fourteen miles to the crossing of the main Allegheny range to the waters of Jackson's River in Bath County, Virginia. All of these are today main highways of travel, and within historical times armed bands of marauding Indians from the Ohio country have been pursued by the avenging pioneers of the Valley and Augusta, Virginia. The other great highway for the aborigines in crossing to the Ohio from what now constitutes the State of Virginia was to follow the valleys of the New and Kanawha Rivers, about seventy miles to the south.

At Marlinton there are numerous evidences of long occupancy. Within a few hundred yards of the courthouse there is a mound of considerable dimensions, although about obliterated by the plow. Within the memory of persons now living it was about ten feet in height. Another mound of earth and stone is situated in the bottom lands near the river, and near the residence of Mr. C. W. Price. From this mound were removed within the past year the remains of at least seven adult skeletons. These

believe that there were no permanent settlements in this part, that is to say that the region was visited by Indians only in their migratory fashion, or perhaps at certain seasons for the fine hunting and fishing that was had here, and which is still a favorite resort of hunters of the white race. The larger articles and cooking utensils that mark the more permanent camp sites in other localities, as in the region of the Chesapeake Bay, and along the Ohio River are almost entirely lacking here. The campsites are usually well marked by the presence of numerous arrows finished and unfinished and broken; beds of periwinkle shells if near the river, and the presence of curious river rocks of some sort that bear heat well, that are pitted on both sides, presumably to allow of handling, and have been used in the crude cookery that prevailed with this primitive people. These camping grounds may be looked for at a point where there is high ground or at or near the juncture of some stream that joins the Greenbrier River the principal river that rises in the eastern part of the state

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pancy. Within a few hundred yards of the courthouse there is a mound of considerable dimensions, although about obliterated by the plow. Within the memory of persons now living it was about ten feet in height. Another mound of earth and stone is situated in the bottom lands near the river, and near the residence of Mr. C. W. Price. From this mound were removed within the past year the remains of at least seven adult skeletons. These had been buried in a manner that indicated that all the bodies had been thrown together and earth heaped on them, or else at some time the skeletons had been disturbed, and afterwards returned to the mound and covered up. There is no record of the mound having been disturbed, except on the surface by the erosive effect of the cultivation of the soil in the surrounding fields, and the skeletons were discovered in an accidental manner by workmen laying a watermain. Some of the bones thrown out at that time I have in my possession, and indicate adult males in the prime of life. Early tradition has it that a battle was fought at this point between the Indians and that the dead were buried in this mound. It may be that the bones were disturbed in the mound at an early



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Pocahontas County has the distinction of having the greatest elevation of any county in the state, and giving rise to more streams than any other: the headwaters of the Greenbrier, the Elk, Cheat, Williams River, Cranberry, Gauley and several others of less importance. Its forests of pines and hardwoods are the finest in the state.

Marlinton, the county seat, is situated at the junction of Knapps Creek with the Greenbrier River from the east and Stony Creek from the west. The Indian Draft is an offshoot of Stony Creek valley, and an old Indian Trail leads up this "draft" four miles to the foot of Elk Mountain and across Elk Mountain to the head of

record of the mound having been disturbed, except on the surface by the erosive effect of the cultivation of the soil in the surrounding fields, and the skeletons were discovered in an accidental manner by workmen laying a watermain. Some of the bones thrown out at that time I have in my possession, and indicate adult males in the prime of life. Early tradition has it that a battle was fought at this point between the Indians and that the dead were buried in this mound. It may be that the bones were disturbed in the mound at an early date in the settlement of the country by the whites and the tradition grew out of the fact that so many skeletons were found together in one burial place. My paternal great grand father owned and cleared the fields where these two mounds are situate, but there is no special family history of them. It is possible that in the stress of winning this country from the revengeful Indian that little value was placed on the mounds as evidence of the earlier occupiers of the soil, and the forests were cleared from them and the mounds leveled by the plow as soon as it was practicable for them to do so.

River. It is certain that early settlers  
Creek regarded them as entirely the  
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My only opinion is that the  
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the y built at the time of their dis-  
covery by the whites. On the  
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surrounding earth, at which  
nd depth a thick layer of ashes was  
found. A very large oak grow-

A small mound of earth and  
stone at the mouth of Locust  
Creek was visited by the writer  
a few years ago. A short time  
before a skeleton had been dis-  
covered in this mound but no  
other relics. There are a few  
mounds in the vicinity of Dun-  
more and Green Bank in the  
upper part of Pocahontas Coun-  
ty, but the writer has never  
seen them.

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Indians traveled far into what  
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throwing up mounds, generally in the neighborhood of their camps, to commemorate some special occasion, as the death of a number of men in battle, or the grave of a distinguished man in the tribe. However, I do not remember to have read that any of the mounds of which I have heard were freshly built at the time of their discovery by the whites. On the contrary, all of which there is any record of early discovery bore the signs of great antiquity, being covered with an ancient growth of forest trees.

A large mound four miles below Marlinton on the top of a high hill, in the primeval forest, has never been disturbed except for a hole sunk from the top about six feet to the level of the surrounding earth, at which depth a thick layer of ashes was found. A very large oak growing on this mound was uprooted many years ago, and tore away a part of one side. This mound is composed of earth and stones, all the stones having been conveyed a distance of several hundred feet, as there is none in the immediate vicinity of the mound. There is probably thirty or forty tons of loose rock in this mound. It is near the mouth of Swago Creek and many relics and other signs of occupancy have been noted in the fields near this mound and in the region surrounding.

At Clover Lick, on the Warwick estate, there are several mounds of the usual form and

There is no evidence that the Indians traveled far into what was a dense forest back from the Greenbrier River and its branches and tributaries. In fact in the fields that have in late years been cleared and cultivated on the uplands and higher mountains only rarely are the arrow points discovered, such as might have been lost in the chase, while nearly every field on the low lands is thickly strewn with these evidences of early occupancy, and at some of camp sites mentioned thousands of arrow points and other relics have been collected after the plowing of the fields, and the soil continues to yield an apparently undiminished supply to those who care to look for them.

Flint, the usual material for the manufacture of arrow points and spear heads is native to the limestone formation of the county, and several beds are known to have been worked. One on the headwaters of Stony Creek, another on Stamping Creek. In the vicinity of both these beds there is good evidence of camp sites, and pebble stone relics are numerous. The public road leading to the head of Stony Creek cuts through a mound about one hundred yards from the ledge of flint, on the lands of James Sharp.

On the Crooked Fork of Elk River on the lands of Robert Gibson there is an "Indian Ring," about 300 feet in diam-

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At Clover Lick, on the Warwick estate, there are several mounds of the usual form and size. These are at the mouth of Clover Creek, and was a famous resort for Indians, a trail leading from Clover Creek valley through the Rider Gap and Big Spring Gap to the waters of Old Field Fork and Big Spring Fork of Elk River, respectively. One of these mounds was opened about one hundred years ago by the late Jacob Warwick, a first settler, an Indian fighter who was at the battle of Point Pleasant, 1774, a veteran of the Revolution. The well preserved bones of an adult were found in a sitting posture, face to the west, and several articles of stone and metal. All was left undisturbed and the burial place left as it was found. Succeeding years and a century's or more cultivation of the soil have about obliterated these mounds. Many relics have been found in the fields surrounding these mounds.

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On the Crooked Fork of Elk River on the lands of Robert Gibson there is an "Indian Ring," about 300 feet in diameter, formed by a sort of wire grass. This phenomenon is well marked and appears whenever the field is in grass, for more than fifty years since the spot was cleared of a dense growth of timber and laurel. There is no evidence that this has any connection with Indian remains, but has been a marvel for half a century. It is well marked even in a small photograph made from a slight elevation and of which I enclose a copy.

Culbert Lee Gwin

Culbert Lee (Cub) Gwin, 83, died at his home near Williamsville Monday, Dec. 4 after a long illness.

He was a son of the late Morgan and Susan Sorrell Gwin and was born near Headwaters Oct. 18, 1884. He was a farmer and had spent his entire life in the Headwaters-Williamsville area and was a member of Southall Presbyterian Chapel.

Surviving is his widow, Mrs. Sallie Hupman Gwin; a sister, Mrs. Ollie Crummett, of Staunton;